

IELTS SPEAKING VOCABULARY BUILDER, BAND 7 & 8

MASTER IDIOMS, PHRASAL VERBS,
COLLOCATIONS, & SLANG



JACKIE BOLEN

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JACKIE BOLEN

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Jackie Bolen:

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Before You

About the Author: Jackie Bolen

I taught English in South Korea for 10 years to every level and type of student. I've taught every age from kindergarten kids to adults. Most of my time has centered around teaching at two universities: five years at a science and engineering school in Cheonan, and four years at a major university in Busan where I taught upper level classes for students majoring in English. In my spare time, you can usually find me outside surfing, biking, hiking, or snowshoeing. I now live in Vancouver, Canada.

In case you were wondering what my academic qualifications are, I hold a Master of Arts in Psychology. During my time in Korea I successfully completed both the Cambridge CELTA and DELTA certification programs. With the combination of almost ten years teaching ESL/EFL learners of all ages and levels, and the more formal teaching qualifications I've obtained, I have a solid foundation on which to offer advice to English learners.

I truly hope that you find this book useful. I would love it if you sent me an email with any questions or feedback that you might have.

Jackie Bolen

Twitter: [_@bolen_jackie](https://twitter.com/_@bolen_jackie)

Email: jb.business.online@gmail.com

You may also want to check out these other books by Jackie Bolen. It's easy to find them wherever you like to buy books.

- English Collocations in Dialogue
- Advanced English Conversation Dialogues
- 1001 English Expressions and Phrases

An Introduction to the IELTS Speaking Test

The IELTS speaking test is the same, whether you choose the general or academic version of the test. It's face-to-face with a real person, as opposed to some other English proficiency tests where you speak into a voice recorder. However, each IELTS speaking test is recorded to ensure quality control.

The test takes 11-14 minutes and consists of 3 parts:

Part 1: The first set consists of general questions about where you work, study or live. There will be two other question sets after that on personal topics such as clothing, holidays, food, etc. It takes 4-5 minutes and will consist of approximately 12 questions in total.

Part 2: Speaking for 1-2 minutes about a topic that will be given to you. You will have 1 minute of preparation time. There may be one short follow-up question.

Part 3: A 4-5 minute discussion that goes into greater depth about the topic from part 2. The examiner has freedom to ask follow-up questions based on your answers. The discussion will be about general ideas and not personal ones (like in part 1). Think of this section as more of a 2-way dialogue with the examiner.

The speaking and listening portions of the test are the same, whether you choose the general or academic version of it. It's the reading and writing portions that are different. Be sure to check

closely which test is required for whatever purpose you're taking the test for. The general test is usually required for immigration purposes while the academic one is most often required for college entrance.

How is the IELTS Speaking Test Graded?

You will be graded on four things:

Fluency and coherence: How quickly you speak, without pauses or repeating yourself. Is the previous thought connected to the next one and how do you finish off what you're saying?

Lexical resources To score at the band 7 level, or above, you'll need to be able to speak about all the topics on the test with precision, as well as use things like collocations (words that occur together more often than by random chance), idioms, slang, and phrasal verbs. This book will focus on helping you with this!

Grammatical range and accuracy: To score at the highest levels, you'll need to be able to form a variety of simple and complex sentences accurately. The keys are to use a variety of sentence types and to make few errors.

Pronunciation: You'll need to be able to be understood very easily, without any effort on the part of the examiner. Plus, you'll have to put emphasize on the correct words within a sentence and also within a longer speaking turn.

Tips for Scoring a Band 7-8

For most proficient English speakers, getting a band 7 or 8 on the IELTS speaking test is a very achievable goal. Here are a few tips for getting there!

One of the keys is striking a balance between giving enough detail in your answers to develop topics fully and not talking too much. The examiner has a prescribed set of questions that they need to get through within a strict time limit. Pause when you're done with your thought. The examiner will ask another question.

Don't feel the need to keep talking, and talking, and talking, and talking. This is not how this test works and you will not get a higher score just because you are able to talk endlessly. This can actually hurt you if you begin to repeat yourself.

Don't repeat yourself but do connect the things you say in an organized way with the use of discourse markers: as I previously mentioned, firstly, after that, finally, etc.

Being able to paraphrase and summarize things is quite important for the test. Aim for a balance between giving some details and also giving a summary or overview of things.

Do NOT attempt to memorize anything for this test. You will get penalized very heavily for this and it is a waste of time. There are so many questions each year that even if you were to find out some of them, it's impossible to memorize that many answers.

Use idioms, phrasal verbs, slang (appropriate!), collocations, etc. Not using idiomatic language will make it difficult to score above a Band 6.

Aim to use precise words to describe something, instead of words like “thing, stuff, like that.” This shows that you don't have a large vocabulary, or can't access it when needed. Avoid filler words that don't have any meaning.

It's easy to repeat words as a kind of filler (the author of this book says, “like” way too much!) when speaking. However, this should be avoided. Look on Google for some sample IELTS speaking test questions and then record yourself answering them to see if there are words that you use too often. Like is the most common one of these kinds of words but there are lots more.

Use a mix of complex and simple sentences. Even if you use simple sentences perfectly, it will make it difficult to score above a Band 5.

Finish off your thoughts in an appropriate way. Ending most sentences with: like that, that's why, that's it, or something similar will make it difficult to score above a band 6.

Show your personality. Emphasize key things in what you're saying and don't be scared to show your opinion about something. The examiner is only grading you on your English ability, not on your opinions about a topic.

Using humour or telling a (short!) funny story about something is great. It's a nice way to show that you know English quite well if you're able to do this.

For part 3, don't get personal. This section is designed to test your ability to talk about general ideas and thoughts which is more difficult to do than talking about personal things. This is the section where candidates can really set themselves apart and have a chance to use higher-level vocabulary and grammatical constructions.

How Difficult is it to Score Band 9?

It's quite difficult (though not impossible) for non-native English speakers to achieve a band 9 on the IELTS speaking test. There are people who have been learning English as a second language (most Europeans for example) since they were a young child and they also have a first language that is similar to English. For these people, it may be achievable.

Or, there are some people who moved to an English speaking country when they were young who may be able to get this score. Or, those who did a large part of their education in English.

However, being a native English speaker doesn't automatically mean that you'll be able to get a 9. It's really not that easy to do! To do that, you'll also need to do the following:

- Develop topics fully and at length.
- Connect thoughts, without repetition.
- Only have pauses that are related to forming an opinion about something, for example and not searching for a word (no pauses in the middle of sentences).
- Use a large range of very precise language, including things like idioms.

- Speak fluently, essentially without grammatical errors.
- Be understood easily, without any effort on the part of the examiner.
- Avoid the use of filler words (this is what even native speakers may struggle with).

The good news is that there is almost no reason why someone would need to get a 9 on this test. For educational, immigration, employment or other purposes, I don't know of any of them that would require getting a 9! So, don't worry about it. Scoring a 7 or 8 on the speaking test is a far more achievable goal and should be acceptable in almost all cases.

How to Use this Book

This book is designed to help you build a bigger vocabulary, especially idioms, phrasal verbs, slang and collocations. If you want to score higher than a band 6, it will be necessary to use this kind of language and your examiner will be specifically listening for it. This will allow you to score in the higher bands for the lexical resources section of the scoring.

To use this book, I recommend doing one lesson per day. There are 40 lessons: 5 each of a general dialogue, idioms, phrasal verbs, slang and collocations. Do the practice exercises and try not to cheat by looking at the answers!

Use a vocabulary notebook and be sure to write down any new words that you learn. Review them frequently and consider making some flashcards. Push yourself to use this new vocabulary when speaking and see if you can find them when watching English TV or movies, or reading.

Make sure you know how to pronounce any new word that you learn. Look on YouTube or Google, “How to say _____” to find out. If you have a large vocabulary, you'll score high on this section of the test but it won't help you that much if you can't pronounce them! You'll score lower on the fourth section, pronunciation.

This book can help you expand your vocabulary range. You might also consider extensive reading and listening as well. Find things to listen to (podcasts, movies, TV shows) or read (books, magazine, newspaper articles) that are at your level, or just slightly below. The key is to read or listen just for fun and to not have to use a dictionary all the time. This will not only help you become more familiar with English vocabulary but it'll also help you improve your grammatical accuracy as well.

Be sure to do some practice tests (search on Google for “IELTS speaking test practice”) and record yourself to review later. Try to use the new vocabulary that you've acquired in this book.

Dialogue 1: Wasting Time

Kim and Sally are talking about summer vacation plans.

What are you up to **this summer**

Oh, every summer, we head to our cabin at Lake Minnewanka.

Wow! I didn't know you had a cabin there.

Yeah, we bought it **5 years ago** and **since** have spent **as much time as possible** there. It's the perfect place for **wasting** doing almost nothing.

Well, you need to make time to relax, right? That sounds **idyllic**.

Definitely.

When are you heading out?

Actually, the **day after** I'm **under the gun** for packing!

Okay, have an awesome trip! Don't forget about your old friends **slaving away** at work.

Vocabulary

This summer Usually refers to time off that people have from school or work during July or August (in North America).

5 years Now is 2021. 5 years ago = 2016.

Since After a certain point in the past.

As much time as The maximum amount, taking into account restrictions like school or work.

Wasting Not doing much.

Idyllic: Tranquil; peaceful.

Day after In 2 days. For example, today is Monday. Day after tomorrow = Wednesday.

Under the gun: Feeling pressure, usually due to a time constraint.

Slaving away: Working hard.

Practice

_____, I've been doing way better.

I'm going to Japan the _____.

I've been _____ on this project for months now.

I graduated from high school _____.

_____ is what summer vacation is all about!

Let's find somewhere _____ to go to for vacation.

Can you stay late tonight? We're kind of _____ here.

_____, I'd love to finally read those books that have been sitting on my nightstand for months!

I try to spend _____ outside. It's great for my mental health.

Answers

since then

day after tomorrow

slaving away

5 years ago

wasting time

idyllic

under the gun

this summer vacation

as much time as possible

Idioms 1

About Face

Meaning: A complete change of direction, either physically or in strategy.

Origin: From a long-standing military command and manoeuvre that's thought to have originated in the British Army.

“We'll need to do an *about face* here. There's no way we can keep going with our current plan.”

Above Board

Meaning: A plan or business agreement that is honest and/or legitimate.

Origin: Thought to have originated from times in which pirates ran the seas. “Under board” was when pirates hid underneath the deck to trick victim ships. Above board is the opposite of that.

“We need to do this whole thing strictly *above* Revenue Canada is watching our every move.”

Ace in the Hole

Meaning: An advantage that is hidden until an opportune time to reveal it.

Origin: A poker term referring to a hidden ace.

“Tim is my *ace in the* Nobody knows how good he is except for me.”

Across the Pond

Meaning: Refers to the Atlantic Ocean. North Americans refer to people from the UK as from “across the pond” and vice versa.

Origin: Centuries ago, a pond could refer to any body of water. This was later adopted into an American/British idiom and used to refer to the Atlantic Ocean.

“What's going on *across the pond* these days?”

Actions Speak Louder than Words

Meaning: Action is more important than saying you will do it. It refers to following through on a promise.

Origin: Unclear, but it's thought to be three centuries old.

“I'm so tired of him doing nothing. *Actions speak louder than words* and he is all talk and no action!”

Act of War

Meaning: The literal meaning is a violent act that is large enough to elicit a war response. The idiom is to conduct an action that elicits a response to start a conflict. For example, a business hiring workers from a rival.

Origin: The legal definition is a country acting to provoke a war or conflict. For example, amassing troops near a disputed border.

“In my mind, what he's doing is *an act of* I'm done playing nice with him.”

Add Fuel to the Fire

Meaning: Making a bad situation worse by increasing anger or hostility.

It dates back to the Roman empire and was adapted in English literature over time.

“Stop *adding fuel to the* You should just stop bugging your brother when he starts to get angry.”

A Day Late and a Dollar Short

Meaning: A missed opportunity due to lateness, lack of effort, disorganization or carelessness.

Origin: Unclear but might be tied to the Great Depression (1930's).

"I appreciate the effort but it's *a day late and a dollar*

Phrasal Verbs 1: Blew Me Away

Ted and Gary are talking about a new guy at work.

I'm so happy that we **brought Tommy over** here when that other branch **closed**

Yeah, he **blew me away** on that last project. He's a guy we can **count on**.

I wasn't sure he was **cut out** for the work culture here but he's **fit in** well.

You're right. Everyone **looks up** to him.

Definitely! The chance we took on him **paid**

Vocabulary

Brought Tommy over: Invited someone (Tommy) to join.

Closed down: Shut.

Blew me away: Impressed.

Count on: Depend on.

Cut out: Fit for something.

Fit in: Get along well in a certain position or place.

Looks up Respects someone.

Paid Yielded some good results.

Practice

I'm so happy that we _____ from that other company. He's been invaluable.

The Yankees _____ with their come-from-behind win in the inning. Jerry _____ his boss.

You can always _____ me for anything you need.

I'm not sure that I'm _____ for this role. I don't have the right training.

All of our hard work _____. We got an A+ on the project!

Many restaurants _____ because of Covid-19.

I hope that Jenny can _____ with her new classmates.

Answers

brought Tommy over

blew me away

looks up to

count on

cut out

paid off

closed down

fit in

Slang 1: Chill Out

Keith is telling Sam that he's going to leave.

Hey, I think I'm going to

Chill You just got here. Why are you leaving?

I'm tired of playing **third wheel** with you **couch**

Come on, stay. We'll watch **a flick** or something.

Nah, I'm going to I want to **catch some rays** at the beach.

You're such **a pain in the** Why don't we come with you though?
I'm tired of sitting around too.

Vocabulary

Leave; depart.

Chill Relax.

Third Describes someone who is spending time with a couple.

Couch People who aren't that active, instead preferring to sit on the couch and watch TV or play video games.

A A movie.

Go somewhere.

Catch some Go outside in the sun.

A pain in the Describes someone who is annoying or bothersome.

Practice

My youngest is such _____.

Let's _____. There are some weird people here.

I don't mind being the _____, depending on the couple.

Let's _____. We need to be there in 15 minutes.

I want to _____ this weekend for sure.

Hey, _____. We don't have to be there for another hour.

Do you want to catch _____ this weekend?

My kids are basically _____ and never want to go outside.

Answers

a pain in the neck

bail

third wheel

roll

catch some rays

chill out

a flick

couch potatoes

Collocations 1: Window Seat

Liz and Amy are talking about a bad experience with flying.

Liz: How was your trip?

Amy: It got off to a slow start but was better at the end.

Liz: Oh no! What happened?

Amy: Well, I hate the **window seat** so requested an **aisle seat** when **booking my flight**. But, I guess the **travel agent** didn't pass the message along. That wasn't the worst of it. The airline **lost my** Thankfully, I had **travel insurance** though.

Liz: Wow! That's bad news.

Amy: Nah, it was fine after I **checked into the** Then, I could relax.

Vocabulary

Window On an airplane, train or bus. The seat next to the window.

Aisle On an airplane, train or bus. The seat next to the aisle.

Booking my Reserving a plane ticket.

Travel Someone who books vacations or travel.

Lost my When suitcases or other personal belongings don't show up when flying.

Travel Insurance that travellers purchase to cover things like lost luggage, flight delays, etc.

Checked into the Got the room key and information you need when staying at a hotel.

Practice

Would you like a _____ or an _____?

The airline _____ but thankfully I had my important medication with me.

Should we use a _____ or book it ourselves?

Don't forget _____. Medical costs are very high in the USA.

My secret is to use an incognito browser window when _____.

You can get cheaper flights that way.

Let's grab dinner after you get _____.

Answers

window seat, aisle seat

lost my luggage

travel agent

travel insurance

booking my flight

checked into the hotel

Dialogue 2: Noise Pollution

Kathleen and Kenny are talking about living in Busan.

Kathleen: Kenny! You lived in Busan, South Korea? I've always wanted to go there. What's it like? I've heard that it's a beautiful **coastal**

Kenny: Well, there's a lot of **noise pollution** and **light** It's the second biggest city in Korea. And **traffic jams** too during **rush**

Kathleen: It sounds terrible.

Kenny: Oh no, it's amazing! I love Nampo-Dong, which has lots of **street food** and **street vendors** plus **trendy** It's perfect for a date.

Kathleen: What else?

Kenny: Well, there's no real **downtown core** or **main square** but there are six beaches within **city** Most people just hang out there, especially in the summertime.

Vocabulary

Coastal city: A city next to the ocean.

Noise pollution: Ambient noise in a city. For example, cars honking.

Light pollution: Light from signs and cars that you can see inside your house at night.

Traffic jams: Lots of cars on the road which makes progress slower than normal.

Rush hour: The busiest times to drive, usually because of people going to work and coming home from work.

Street food: Food from an outside stall.

Street vendors: People selling things at an outside stall.

Trendy cafes: Coffee shops that are fashionable and hip.

Downtown core: The area in a city with lots of tall buildings; an important place of business.

Main square: The most important public courtyard in a city.

City limits: The outer edge of the city, including suburbs. Not just the downtown core.

Practice

I love to buy Christmas presents from _____. There are lots of interesting things.

Vancouver is the best _____ in Canada.

Within the _____, you can find three beaches and countless parks.

Go after 9:30 am to avoid _____.

Where's the _____? I'd love to spend some time there and people watch.

The best _____ in Korea? Honestly, I can't choose. There are many delicious things.

The _____ in Edmonton is famous for being boring at night.

_____ makes it difficult for me to sleep at night even though I have blackout curtains.

My boyfriend loves to spend time at _____ on weekends. I think they're expensive!

During _____, it takes twice as long to get home.

The _____ is terrible here. I have to wear earplugs to sleep at night.

Answers

street vendors

coastal city

city limits

traffic jams

main square

street food

downtown core

light pollution

trendy cafes

rush hour

noise pollution

Idioms 2

An Accident Waiting to Happen

Meaning: Can refer to someone or something that is/are in a dangerous situation where an accident is likely to occur.

Unclear; first use is from the early 1900s.

“Your steps are *an accident waiting to*

An Arm and a Leg

Meaning: Something that is extremely expensive and possibly too expensive.

Origin: Possibly refers to 20th century wartime, where a soldier could lose an arm and/or a leg in battle.

“Houses cost *an arm and a leg* in Vancouver.”

A Penny for your Thoughts

Meaning: A way of asking someone what they are thinking.

Origin: Unclear.

penny for your

A Penny Saved is a Penny Earned

Meaning: Means that saving money is as important as earning money.

Origin: Benjamin Franklin created the term in his book, “Poor Richard’s Almanac.”

“It's not all about income but about living frugally as well. A *penny saved is a penny earned*.”

A Pretty Penny

Meaning: Refers to something that costs a lot of money.

Origin: Unclear, but first seen in 1800s literature.

“His new car must have cost *a pretty*

A Rising Tide Lifts All Boats

Improvements in the whole economy will benefit all participants in it.

Origin: Thought to have originated on the east coast of the USA. However, it was popularized by John F. Kennedy (then a Senator) to refer to economic growth.

“We need to focus on improving Canada's GDP post-Covid. A *rising tide lifts all boats* and the average Canadian will be more prosperous.”

As Far as I Can Tell

Meaning: To the best of my understanding.

Origin: Unknown.

“*As far as I can* it's just going to be the three of us for dinner tonight.”

A Short Fuse

Meaning: Describes someone who is quick to anger or has a short temper.

Origin: An explosive device that will explode quickly because the fuse is short.

“Keith has such *a short* He's always getting in fights with people when playing basketball.”

A Stone's Throw

Meaning: A short distance.

Unclear, but first mentioned in early English versions of the Bible as “a stone's cast.”

“The bakery? It's just *a stone's throw* away. Just walk around the corner and you'll see it.”

At the Drop of a Hat

Meaning: To do something without delay or hesitation.

Origin: From the 19th century where dropping a hat signified the start of a race or fight.

“Call Ted next time! He'll play tennis *at the drop of a*

Phrasal Verbs 2: Break Up

Keith is talking to Carrie about breaking up with her boyfriend.

Did you **break up** with Chris yet?

I was hoping you wouldn't ask me that question! I can't **go through with** it. I'm worried that he's going to be **pissed off** at me.

You can **let him off** easily though, right? Be super kind. I know that you don't like **hanging around** with him.

It's true, yes. I need to **shake things up** and finally end it. Let me go do it right now before I **talk myself out of** it.

Vocabulary

Break End a romantic relationship.

Go through Do something that you have planned in advance.

Pissed Be angry at someone or about something.

Let him Release.

Hanging Spending time with.

Shake things Make a change.

Talk myself out Convince yourself not to do something.

Practice

I think you should _____ with Tony. He's not a good guy!

Jay is _____ because I made him clean his room.

I have to not _____ asking women out. I just get so nervous

Sid and Jen are _____ together a lot these days. Maybe they'll start dating?

I'm not sure I can _____ the tattoo. It seems so painful.

We need to _____ a bit. Maybe we need to fire one of the low-performers?

I'm not sure you should _____ so easily. He needs some punishment for what he did. You don't always need to be the good guy.

Answers

break up

pissed off

talk myself out of

hanging around

go through with

shake things up

let him off

Slang 2: My Bad

Owen is apologizing for cancelling a plan with Nate.

Nate: Hey, so what happened last night? We were supposed to **hang out**.

My bad. I **pulled an all-nighter** the night before and **crashed** hard. I didn't even see your messages until this morning.

Okay. **No** It was a **bummer** though! I wanted to see you. I did **hit the books** though for that test next week so **not all was**

Are you free this weekend? Let me buy you dinner to make up for it.

I'm Friday night?

Perfect.

Vocabulary

Hang Spend time with someone.

Pulled an Stayed up the entire night to study or work.

Suddenly had no energy.

No It's okay.

Too bad.

Hit the Studied.

Not all was There was something positive in a bad situation.

I'm An expression that shows you want to do the thing that the other person is suggesting. Same as, "I'm in."

Practice

_____ with whatever. What are you thinking?

Oh, _____. I don't even care about that.

I _____ last week and I'm still tired from it.

Bobby, you need to _____. Isn't your test tomorrow?

Do you want to _____ this weekend?

It was annoying but _____. We were able to recover the data.

I _____ so hard last night after 10 hours at the beach.

That's a _____ about your car not starting.

Answers

I'm down

no worries

pulled an all-nighter

hit the books

hang out

not all was lost

crashed

bummer

Collocations 2: Online Dating

Jen and Tina are talking about online dating.

Hey, so what's new with you **these**

Oh, not much. But I did start doing **online**

Nice! How's that going?

It's like finding a **needle in a** I mean, they don't have to look like **movie stars** but I'm so tired of guys with **facial beards** and **bushy** Gross.

So what are you looking for?

Nothing complicated. Someone with an **athletic outgoing** and a **good sense of** Shouldn't be too difficult, right?

Vocabulary

These Lately; recently.

Online Finding a love match through the Internet.

Needle in a haystack: Describes something that is difficult to find.

Movie Famous actors or actresses.

Facial Beard or mustache.

Shaggy Beards that are not well-groomed.

Bushy Big eyebrows that are not well-groomed.

Athletic Describes someone in good shape who exercises a lot.

Outgoing Describes someone who likes being around people.

Good sense of Describes someone who likes to laugh and tell jokes.

Practice

What have you been up to _____?

How did he get such an _____? He must be working out a lot.

Guys with _____ are all the rage lately.

Finding my keys in the morning is like finding a _____.

I love that my co-worker has such a _____. I'm always laughing.

Who are your favourite _____?

I'm thinking about growing out my _____. What do you think?

I hate my _____. It's so much work to keep them trimmed.

I'm looking for someone with an _____ because I'm kind of shy.

I know that you don't want to but I think you'd have good luck with _____.

Answers

these days

athletic build

shaggy beards

needle in a haystack

good sense of humour

movie stars

facial hair

bushy eyebrows

outgoing personality

online dating

Dialogue 3: Highly Effective

Jim and John are talking about managing money.

Hey John. I'm wondering how you and Tina manage your money? It's a **key issue** for Jen and I and we need to come up with a better system.

John: We've been **married for 20 years** now and have a **joint** What works for us is that we're **brutally honest** about what we spend our money on. We don't **keep**

Jim: You're married to a keeper. That's for sure. Jen is **between jobs** and I'm **worried sick** about it. We may have to **borrow money** from the bank to **pay the**

John: Sorry to hear that. When **money was tight** for us, we found a **highly** budgeting system. It could work for you.

Vocabulary

Key The most important thing.

Married for ____ Number of years after a wedding that two people are together.

Joint A bank account that two or more people hold together.

Brutally Holding nothing back from each other; no secrets.

Keep Not telling important information.

Between Describes someone who lost a job but is looking for another one.

Worried Anxious or stressed out to the extreme.

Borrow Get a loan.

Money was Not enough money.

Highly Describes something that works very well.

Practice

Tony and I have been _____.

Can I be _____ with you? This partnership just isn't working out for us.

I don't want to _____ from each other anymore. It makes our relationship difficult.

Tim always seems to be _____. I wonder what's up with him? _____ when I was going to medical school.

I know that you're _____ about it but get some sleep.

I've heard that it's a _____ system for losing weight.

Why don't we open up a _____? It would make things easier.

Let's try to _____ to make it through these next few weeks.

Answers

married for 10 years

brutally honest

keep secrets

between jobs

money was tight

worried sick

highly effective

joint account

borrow money

Idioms 3

Bang for the Buck

Meaning: Something that offers good value for the money you paid for it.

Origin: Bang = excitement and buck = money. Could be a play on Pepsi's advertising campaign from the 1950s, "More bounce to the ounce."

"We need to get more *bang for our* Mason just isn't worth what we're paying him."

Barking up the Wrong Tree

Meaning: To accuse someone of causing a problem that they didn't cause. Or, to pursue a misguided course of action.

Origin: From the early 1800s when dogs were used on hunts. Some intelligent animals would trick dogs into believing they were in a certain tree but they were actually in another one. This is why dogs would bark while standing under the wrong tree.

"Talk to Lindsey. You're *barking up the wrong tree* for this project. I'm not in charge."

Be all Ears

Meaning: To tell someone that they have your undivided attention.

Origin: Unclear.

“Go ahead. *I'm all*

Be at a Crossroads

To be at a point where an important decision must be made.

Where two roads intersect. If you take one road, you can't take the other one.

at a crossroads in life since getting fired. I'm not sure if I should find another job or go back to school.”

Beat the Odds

Meaning: To win or succeed when it is not probable to do so or when the chances are low.

Origin: Most often used as a gambling term. It's often used with reference to horse racing or sports betting.

“He *beat the odds* and is now cancer-free.”

Be on Solid Ground

Meaning: Your decision or conclusion is solid, secure; a good decision that isn't considered to be risky.

Origin: From physical combat or war—to defend at a line to prevent invasion beyond the line.

not on solid ground with that latest decision. I'm worried about what her boss is going to think.”

Bite Off More than you can Chew

Meaning: Taking on more tasks than you are capable of completing.

Origin: Originated in the late 19th century in the United States. It refers to when someone is offered a bite of something, to just take a small bite. It's a reminder to the recipient to not be greedy.

“Don't you think Ted maybe *bit off more than he can* I can't believe he volunteered to do more overtime.”

Blow Smoke

Meaning: To exaggerate or say things that aren't true, to make oneself seem better.

Origin: From the 1900s. It's possibly connected to magicians using smoke to hide a trick.

"That guy is *blowing* so much *smoke* right now! Let's go. I can't listen to it any more."

Call the Shots

Meaning: The leader of a group who makes decisions.

Origin: Appears to originate from the early 1900s, regarding military marksmanship. An excellent marksman makes good shots and "calls" them too (says where they will go).

"Please talk to Tina. I don't *call the shots* around here."

Phrasal Verbs 3: Come Apart

Kent is talking to Bob about how busy he is.

Bob: Hey, how are you doing these days? Didn't you just have your third child?

Kent: I sometimes feel like I **can't go** I'm starting to **come apart** at the seams. I have to work all the time to **pay for** everything and my wife just **went back** to work too. We have no time to do anything fun.

Bob: That sounds tough. I remember when you used to **come out** for beers with the boys! Those days are done for a while I guess.

Kent: I'd love to **get back to** that one day. Maybe not for a while though.

Bob: Hang in there my friend! **Cheer**

Vocabulary

Can't go on: Too tired to continue.

Come apart: Break down.

Pay for: Spend money on something or someone.

Went Returned.

Come out: Leave the house to do something with people.

Get back to: Return to doing something.

Hang in there: Don't give up.

Cheer up: Be happy!

Practice

I _____ with that job anymore. I hate it so much.

Having a drink with the boys is so fun until someone has to _____ it!

I _____ to school in my thirties to become a lawyer.

_____ with studying for your test. It's coming up soon.

Why don't you _____ with us tonight? We're going to grab a few drinks.

_____! It could have certainly been worse.

Let's _____ work.

The lining in your suit jacket is starting to _____. Why don't you replace it?

Answers

can't go on

pay for

went back

hang in there

come out

cheer up

get back to

come apart

Slang 3: Pit Stop

Ted and Ryan are on a road trip.

Hey buddy, can we make a **pit** I need to **drain the**

Can you make it to a gas station without having a

Ummm...maybe not. Just **pull** okay? Or you might have to do **damage**

Okay! Hurry up though. I'm getting **hangry** and want to get something to eat.

Okay. I will! I know how grumpy you get when you don't eat breakfast.

Vocabulary

Pit Stopping to get snacks or go to the bathroom on a road trip.

Drain the Go to the bathroom.

Disgusting.

Too much information. Used to express displeasure when someone tells you something that you think should be kept private.

Temper tantrum.

Pull Stop the car on the side of the road.

Damage Trying to contain a bad situation.

Hungry + angry combined

Practice

I always get so _____ when I skip breakfast.

I need to _____ before we leave.

My son had a huge _____ this morning about what to wear to school.

We'll need to do _____ on this one. The report has already leaked out.

Stop right there! It's already _____.

Can we make a _____, please? I'd love to get another coffee.

Please _____ right now. I'm feeling carsick.

So _____. Did you see that guy pick his nose?

Answers

hangry

drain the lizard

meltdown

damage control

TMI

pit stop

pull over

gross

Collocations 3: Tennis Match

Kay is talking to Sid about his tennis injury.

So what did you get up to **this weekend** Sid? Wait...what happened to your face? That looks like it hurts.

I had a **tennis match** and I got hit in the face with the ball. It's just a **minor injury** but I had to go to the **emergency room** to **get**

Good thing you didn't sustain **serious** It could have been bad if you'd gotten hit in the eye.

Yeah, nothing serious as long as I **take antibiotics** to **prevent** The worst thing was that we lost the match because I had to leave to go to the hospital.

Vocabulary

This Previous, or next Saturday or Sunday (depends on when talking about it—earlier, or later in the week).

Tennis Tennis game that consists of 3 or 5 sets.

Minor Not a serious injury.

Emergency Place to get immediate medical treatment.

Get Using a needle and thread to close a cut in the skin.

Serious A big medical problem.

Take Taking pills to stop the spread of infection.

Prevent Taking antibiotics or cleaning a wound so that bacteria don't get out of control.

Practice

Do you want to catch a movie with me _____?

Clean the wound first to help _____.

Did you have to _____ for that cut?

It looks worse than it is. It's just a _____.

Did you see the _____ between Nadal and Federer?

You'll have to _____ for that but please finish them all.

Please call 911 for _____.

I think I need to go to the _____. My arm is probably broken.

Answers

this weekend

prevent infection

get stitches

minor injury

tennis match

take antibiotics

serious injuries

emergency room

Dialogue 4: Make Waves

Jerry and Linda are talking about a decision at work.

Jerry: I don't want to **make waves** here, but I don't think Kim is making a good financial decision for our company.

Linda: Oh, I don't know. Maybe you just don't see **eye to** I think she's done a lot of research and **knows what she's** She's generally quite good at making decisions. It's why they pay her the **big**

Jerry: Well, I understand why you'd think that. You were **born with a silver spoon in your** just like Kim, and have never really been **short on cash**. Anyway, it's some **food for**

Linda: To play the **Devil's** making big decisions is **second nature** to her. She's great at it!

Jerry: Hmmm...okay. Let's **agree to** We're never going to **settle** this I think.

Vocabulary

See eye to eye: Agree with someone.

Born with a silver spoon in your mouth: Describes someone who comes from a wealthy family who doesn't have to work that hard

in life.

Food for thought: Something to think about.

Make waves: To cause trouble.

Devil's advocate: Someone who takes the other side in an argument.

Knows what she's doing: Sure of something or do something correctly.

Agree to disagree: To stop talking about something controversial when you can't agree.

Settle: Decide or agree to something.

Big bucks: To have a very high salary.

Second Nature: Something that someone does easily and well because they've done it often.

Practice

My mom and I had to finally _____ because there was no way we could understand each other's point of view.

I'm not trying to _____ but I just don't agree with what's going on at my company.

I'm thinking about changing jobs. My boss and I don't _____.

My cousin was _____ and has never had to work a day in his life.

My younger brother's most annoying habit is his need to always play the _____.

That newspaper article had some _____ in it.

I've learned so much from my teacher. I can see she _____.

I was hoping to not have to _____ for that job because the salary isn't great but it's tough to find a new job in this economy.

Skating is _____ to him. He's been doing it since he was three.

He has a ton of responsibility but that's why they pay him the _____.

Answers

agree to disagree

make waves

see eye to eye

born with a silver spoon in his mouth

Devil's advocate

food for thought

knows what she's doing

settle

second nature

big bucks

Idioms 4

Can't Judge a Book by Its Cover

Meaning: To not judge something or someone by their outward appearance alone.

Origin: First appeared in 1944 African journal, as “don’t judge a book by its binding.” It evolved to the current form in 1946.

“I know he may not be the most handsome guy but you *can't* always *judge a book by its* He does have a lot of good features, including a well-paying job.”

Cash Cow

Meaning: Something that is a reliable source of income.

Origin: Refers to a female dairy cow that gives birth and produces milk afterwards. Then, she repeats the cycle again. It requires little effort or labour to produce milk. From the 1970s.

“We need to find a *cash* Our current products just don't have enough profit margin.”

Cat Got your Tongue

Meaning: A saying to someone who is unusually quiet.

Origin: Possibly from Egyptian times, when a person's tongue was cut off and fed to cats if the person had lied or been blasphemous.

"Has the *cat got your* Why are you so quiet?"

Chew it Over

To take time to think about something before making a decision.

Uncertain.

"Can I *chew it over* for a week? I need to talk to my wife about it."

Come Hell or High Water

To be determined to accomplish something, no matter the circumstances.

Origin: Of American origin but it's not well understood where it came from. The first reference is from a newspaper in 1882.

"Come hell or high water, I'm going to get this project done on time."

Come Rain or Shine

Meaning: Something completed or finished, no matter the circumstances (rain or shine). Can be used literally to talk about the weather, or figuratively.

Origin: Used regularly since the mid-1800s.

rain or the soccer game will still happen!"

Cry Wolf

To call for help, ask for assistance or raise an alarm unnecessarily or when you don't need it.

Origin: from the Aesop fable named, "The Boy Who Cried Wolf."

"Stop *crying wolf* if you don't mean it. Nobody is going to help you when you are in trouble."

Cry Over Spilled Milk/Cry Over Spilt Milk

Meaning: To say that one should not be upset about something that has happened and cannot be changed.

Unclear

“Don't *cry over spilled* okay? You have another chance tomorrow.”

Curiosity Killed the Cat

Meaning: Being unnecessarily inquisitive or curious about something can lead to a dangerous or unwanted situation.

Unclear, but vaguely refers to a cat's nine lives.

“You don't need to know about that! Remember that *curiosity killed the*

Cut to the Chase

Meaning: Telling someone to get to the point in their speaking.

From 1930 silent films in the US film industry. It's when the director requests to cut filming to the chase (the most exciting) scene.

to the I only have another couple of minutes before I need to go to my meeting.”

Phrasal Verbs 4: Worn Out

Lucy is talking to Sarah about how tired she is.

Hey Lucy, how was your day?

Ohhh...I'm **beat up** and **worn** I had to **run around** all over town and then I was the last one at the office so I had to **lock** It took me so long to **get out of** there.

That sounds terrible. Are you going to **turn in** early?

Yeah. I'm going to **wash up** and **head towards** bed. Goodnight.

Vocabulary

Beat Weary; tired.

Worn Tired.

Run Do lots of things in a short amount of time.

Lock Secure something.

Get out Leave; avoid something.

Turn Go to bed.

Wash Clean (dishes or body).

Head Go to.

Practice

I'm _____ from that soccer game. You don't look _____ though!

How is that possible?

Can you _____ the dishes please?

Can you _____ at close? I need to leave a bit early tonight so I can't do it.

I know you want to _____ this but there's no way to avoid it.

Let's _____ home. I'm starting to get tired and hungry!

Why don't you _____ and have an early night?

I have to _____ after I drop the kids off at school and do a million things.

Answers

worn out/beat up

wash up

lock up

get out of

head towards

turn in

run around

Slang 4: Dumped

Alex got dumped by his girlfriend.

Hey what's up? You don't look so good.

I just got **dumped** by Kendra. And just when we started talking about **getting hitched**.

Sorry to hear that. Wasn't she super **flakey** though, always cancelling at the last minute?

Yeah, and I **straight up** caught her lying to me more than a few times.

Better off without her. Let's get **ripped** this weekend. It'll take your mind off of it.

Yeah, I want to **blow off some** Just don't post about it on social media. I don't want to get **busted** by my boss. He just **added me** as a friend on Facebook.

Vocabulary

A way to greet a close male friend (if you're also a guy).

Broken up with.

Getting Getting married.

Describes someone who doesn't follow through with what they say or always cancels plans.

Straight Speaking honestly.

Drunk.

Blow off some Relax; let loose.

Added me: Becoming friends with someone on social media.

Practice

What do you like to do to _____?

I'll never work on another project with her if I can avoid it. She's so _____.

I got _____ last night at the work Christmas party. I hope that I didn't do anything too embarrassing.

Did you hear that Ted _____ Lindsay?

My grandma just _____ on Instagram. It's so cute!

I _____ never want to talk to that guy again.

Tom and I are _____ next month.

Hey _____, how are you doing these days?

Answers

blow off some steam

flakey

ripped

dumped

added me

straight up

getting hitched

bro

Collocations 4: Torrential Rain

Karen and Bill are talking about the weather forecast.

It **looks like rain** out there with all those **dark**

Definitely. I checked the **weather forecast** and it's calling for **torrential rain** and **high**

Oh no. I hope we can get home **after**

I think it'll be fine. But **keep in touch** and **let me know** when you make it.

Sure thing. **Stay safe.**

Vocabulary

Looks like Lots of dark clouds, wind, humidity, etc. that signal rain is coming.

Dark Clouds that are grey or black.

Weather Weather prediction for the next hours or days.

Torrential Extremely heavy rain.

High Very strong winds.

After When you're done working.

Keep in Stay connected via phone or email.

Let me know: Tell the outcome of something.

Stay Take caution to not get into trouble or danger.

Practice

It really _____. Do you think we'll be able to have our picnic?

What's the _____ say for this weekend?

Please _____ and limit your contacts with other people.

Do you want to grab a beer _____?

It's really difficult driving in _____.

Hey, will you please _____ if you can come over next week?

The _____ knocked over a bunch of power lines in my city.

You can usually see _____ before a tornado forms.

_____, okay? I want to know how it turns out.

Answers

looks like rain

weather forecast

stay safe

after work

torrential rain

let me know

high winds

dark clouds

keep in touch

Dialogue 5: Goofing Around

Andy and Matt are talking about their kids.

Andy: How's it going these days?

Matt: Oh, I'm feeling like I might **snap** at any moment. My kids alternate between **goofing around** and **beating each other up**. I wish they'd **cut it out** and act normally.

Andy: That sounds tough. They'll **grow up** before you know it though! Enjoy it while they're young.

Matt: I know that but they **wear me** I hate **dealing with** their battles.

Andy: **Lighten up** a little! Let them **battle it** I know it's bad but I let my kids **get away with** murder! It helps me stay sane.

Vocabulary

Snap: Get suddenly angry.

Goofing Being silly or joking with someone.

Beating each other up: Hitting or being physically violent towards each other.

Cut it out: Stop doing something.

Grow up: Get bigger or older.

Wear me down: Make me feel tired and weary.

Dealing with: Handling.

Lighten up: Relax; not take things so seriously.

Battle it out: Fight until there's a winner.

Get away with: To do something bad but not receive punishment for it.

Practice

I'm not sure you should get in between them. Why not let them _____?

My kids _____! I need to take a walk every day to get a break.

Hey, stop _____. We need to get some things done.

You should _____. It'll be better for your mental health.

Kids _____ so quickly.

I'm going to _____ if you don't stop that.

The pen tapping annoys me. Please _____.

I know you're _____ a lot right now. Can I help by watching your kids tonight?

Do you think we can _____ it? I'm worried that we won't.

My cat and dog love _____.

Answers

battle it out

wear me down

goofing around

lighten up

grow up

snap

cut it out

dealing with

get away with

beating each other up

Idiom 5

Cut (Someone) Some Slack

Meaning: To give someone a chance or time to change behaviour to meet a desired outcome.

Origin: Refers to boats with sails. Means to stop pulling on the rope to allow the other person some space/rope to fix a problem.

“Please *cut me some slack* with this report. I was in the hospital last week.”

Double Down

To double or increase a risk of a commitment because you are confident that it's going to succeed.

Origin: Refers to doubling your bet for a blackjack hand if you are confident that you're going to beat the dealer.

“Do you think we should *double down* on Pfizer stock? They're going to make a ton of money from their Covid-19 vaccine.”

Drive (Someone) Up the Wall

Meaning: To annoy or frustrate a person to the point the person is extremely irritated or angry.

Origin: Possibly centuries old, but the origin is unclear. It could be referring to someone in prison trying to escape over the wall. Or, to a prisoner who is stopped at the wall.

“My son is *driving my husband up the* I can't wait for summer vacation to be over.”

Eat Your Words

Meaning: To be forced to admit you were wrong about something.

Uncertain but traced back to the 1500s.

“You're going to have to *eat your words* and apologize to your dad I think.”

Fly Off the Handle

Meaning: To lose control in a situation

Origin: Implies the uncontrolled way in which a loose axe head flies off from its handle. It's an American saying that was first found in print in Thomas C. Haliburton's *The Attaché* in the late 1800s.

“My math teacher always *flies off the handle* for the smallest things—like a cellphone ringing in class.”

Follow in (Someone's) Footsteps

Meaning: To do the same thing that another person has done before. Often refers to children who choose the same job as one of their parents.

Origin: Unclear but first seen in the 1500s.

“Are you going to *follow in your dad's* He's such a great doctor.”

Get a Grip

Meaning: To understand how to deal with something, to control emotions, or to understand a topic.

Origin: From the 1500s in the military, meaning to put effort into what one is doing; also college jargon to pay attention.

“You need to *get a grip* here! You're going to fail the course.”

Get Away with Something

To avoid the consequences of a wrong action.

Unclear.

“Don't worry. She's not going to *get away with*

Get to the Bottom of Something

To discover the true reason or cause of something.

Origin: Alludes to discovering architectural artifacts from other eras to find out more about that era. The literal meaning is the requirement to dig to get to the bottom.

“We need to *get to the bottom of* why the latest ad campaign didn't work.”

Phrasal Verbs 5: Bring Back

Christina and Jerry are talking about planning a work Christmas party.

Hey Jerry. Why don't we **bring back** the office Christmas party?

Shut I love that idea. I can **get behind** that. I'll help you **figure it out**.

Well, let's **check with** Ted and **nail down** a date and time.

Awesome, let's **hand out** invitations next week.

Sounds great. Maybe if we have enough free drinks, we can finally see Tim and Carrie **make**

Vocabulary

Bring Resume something that has stopped.

Shut Be quiet.

Get Support.

Figure it Solve a problem.

Check Talk to.

Nail Decide on a definite plan.

Hand Distribute.

Make Kiss.

Practice

Let's _____ weekly beer nights, okay?

Don't worry too much about it. I'll help you _____.

Can you please _____ these papers to your classmates?

Which candidate are you going to _____ for the next election?

Let me _____ Mary to see what time works for her.

I want to _____ our vacation time before it's too late.

The rumour on the street is that you want to _____ with Ted.

I wish he would _____. I can't listen to him talk anymore.

Answers

bring back

figure it out

hand out

get behind

check with

nail down

make out

shut up

Slang 5: Hooked On

Kerry and Sabrina are talking about snowboarding.

Hey Sabrina, you're looking good these days! What's up?

I'm **hooked** on snowboarding. I have a few **epic fails** but no broken bones yet. I've been going every weekend.

Where do you go?

Whistler usually. I have a season's pass.

Did you pick up some How do you get there?

Yeah, I just bought a used car!

That sounds awesome.

Do you board? We can go together.

I'm I haven't gone in years but it's **a piece of** right?

Sabrina: Yeah, it's just **like riding a** Seriously, let's go next weekend.

Vocabulary

Addicted.

Epic Major problems.

Awesome; great.

A car.

Great!

I'm I want to do it.

A piece of Describes something that's easy to do.

Like riding a bike: Describes something that you can easily do after many years of not doing it.

Practice

Don't worry about that test. I wrote it last year and it was _____.
_____! I loved that new video you just posted.

You'll be fine. It's just _____.

_____ for whatever. Just let me know the plan.

I'm so _____ on The Queen's Gambit.

Once you get some _____, you'll never want to go back to taking the bus.

That's a _____ bike you have there.

We had a few _____ at the beginning of the project but things are running smoothly now.

Answers

a piece of cake

sick

like riding a bike

I'm game

hooked

wheels

sweet

epic fails

Collocations 5: Go to Great Lengths

Tim is talking to Ken about a first aid course he's going to take this weekend.

Ken: So what are you doing this weekend?

Tim: Oh, I'm taking a **first aid** course. You never know when I might have to **save someone's**

Wow! You go to **great lengths** to **do good** in this world.

Oh, I just like to **do the right** Plus, I like to **stay busy** and fill up my **free time** with interesting things.

Ken: Well, **break a** I hope it goes well.

Vocabulary

First aid: Basic medical help from someone who is not a medical professional.

Save someone's life: Prevent someone from dying by an action you took.

Great lengths: Above and beyond what is necessary.

Do good: Do helpful things for others, animals, the environment, etc.

Do the right thing: Make good choices.

Stay busy: Have lots of things going on.

Free time: Not working or studying.

Break a leg: Wishing someone, “good luck.”

Practice

Do you want to take a _____ course with me next month?

He went to _____ to get into medical school. I'm so happy now that he's a doctor.

My philosophy of life is to _____ in this world.

Now that I have kids, I don't have any _____.

Bob is such a good guy. You can always count on him to _____.

Who knows. Maybe you can _____ one day.

Hey, _____ tonight. You'll be great!

I like to _____ at night so I don't sit on my couch, watch TV, and eat junk food!

Answers

first aid

great lengths

do good

free time

do the right thing.

save someone's life

break a leg

stay busy

Dialogue 6: Bitter Divorce

Sierra and Brian are talking about their friends getting divorced.

Sierra: Did you **hear the** Jeremy and Katie are going through a **bitter**

Brian: Really? What about the kids? Are they doing **joint custody** or **sole**

Sierra: Joint custody. Jeremy will have them **on weekends** but he has to **pay child**

Brian: Poor kids. That was a pretty **dysfunctional family** and they've already had a **troubled childhood**.

Sierra: A **broken home** might be better than all that conflict though. It's too bad that Jeremy and Katie aren't **on good**

Vocabulary

Hear the news: Catch the latest gossip.

Bitter divorce: A divorce that is hostile with both people feeling angry towards the other.

Joint custody: When divorced parents each spend some time taking care of their children.

Sole custody: When a divorced parent is responsible 100% of the time for the children.

On weekends: On Saturday and Sunday.

Pay child support: When one divorced parent has to give money to the other parent to help pay for the care of the children.

Dysfunctional family: A family with many problems.

Troubled childhood: Growing up in a family or situation with a lot of problems.

Broken home: A home where the parents are divorced.

On good Friendly and get along well.

Practice

Thankfully my former boss and I are _____. I need him for a reference.

I grew up in a _____ but have worked hard to overcome this.

Alex and Jen seem to be doing well with their _____ agreement.

Did you _____ ? Jeremy cheated on his wife.

_____, I like to spend as much time outside as possible.

He's had a _____ so far. I'm surprised that he still does well at school.

I want to get _____ of the kids. Tom is a terrible father.

I grew up in a _____ and have tried my best to make things better for my kids.

I had such a _____ but I'm happy that I don't have to see him anymore.

She does _____ but it should be way more than \$500 a month I think.

Answers

on good terms

broken home

joint custody

hear the news

on weekends

troubled childhood

sole custody

dysfunctional family

bitter divorce

pay child support

Idioms 6

Get Your Feet Wet

To start a new job or activity by doing simple tasks first to become comfortable.

Origin: From the 16th century. It refers to a person slowly entering the water with their feet first to become comfortable with the temperature before going in with their whole body.

“Why don't you start with this first? It'll be a nice way to *get your feet*

Go Down in Flames

To fail badly at something.

Origin: From the 1940s or earlier. It's a war reference to combat planes falling to the ground, leaving a trail of fire and bursting in flames upon landing.

“It's either going to be wildly successful or *go down in* I'm not sure what will happen yet.”

Hang in There

Meaning: A way to tell someone not to give up because circumstances will improve.

Origin: 2 possible origins.

From competitive sport in the USA in the 1950s. Used as an encouragement to teammates.

From a motivational poster in the 1960s/70s that said “Hang in there, baby!”

in there. I know it's difficult but your final exam is just around the corner.”

Hard to Swallow

Meaning: Something that is difficult to believe or accept.

Origin: From the 17th century. It refers to pills that are sometimes hard to swallow. It originated as bitter (a bitter pill to swallow) and evolved to hard later on. It can be heard as “tough to swallow,” or, “A tough pill to swallow.”

“Honestly, his excuse is *hard to* I don't believe he was sick the day before a holiday.”

Have a Crush on (Someone)

The initial stages of a romantic attraction to someone.

Origin: Traced to the 1884 journal of Isabella Maud Rittenhouse about a romantic interest.

“I *have a crush on* my new co-worker. She's not only cute but funny too!”

Have it in for (Someone)

Meaning: To constantly desire to harm someone physically or emotionally.

Origin: Unclear.

“Wow. Tony *has it in for* Is he trying to make him quit?”

Have the Upper Hand

Meaning: To have an advantage over others in a situation.

Origin: Used as a way to determine teams using a baseball bat for a game. It may also refer to a couple holding hands where the dominant person has the upper hand.

“Let's go in for the kill. I think we *have the upper*

It's the Best Thing Since Sliced Bread

Meaning: Something or someone that is useful or good, Refers to the best thing that has come around in a long time.

Origin: Most likely refers to a Wonderbread advertising Slogan (the first company to manufacture pre-sliced, pre-wrapped bread).

“This new TV series is *the best thing since sliced* I love it so much.”

Jump Ship

To leave or quit something abruptly, because you thought it was failing.

Origin: Refers to a sailor wishing to leave the ship without permission—thus jumping off the ship.

“Your company is about to go bankrupt. Don't you think it's time to *jump*”

Phrasal Verbs 6: Hold On

Mickey and Tanya are talking about a problem at work.

So I think we can **head back** to work now. Let's just **keep to** our original plan.

Hold on a second. Sorry to **butt in** like this but I think we need to **back up** a bit here. This problem isn't going to **go away** if we do nothing about it. We need to change something up.

So what do you suggest?

I think we need to **come back** to the original question and see if there's a more creative way of looking for solutions. There must be. Then we need to choose one of them and **stick with** the plan across the board.

Okay, you're right. Back to the drawing board. Let's get this problem solved!

Vocabulary

Head Go back to something.

Keep Stick with something.

Hold Wait.

Butt Interrupt.

Back Return to a previous thing.

Go Leave.

Come Return.

Stick Not give up.

Practice

I'm going to _____ home now. I'm so tired.

Let's make dinner when you _____ from your run.

Sorry to _____ like this but I think it's an emergency.

Let's _____ and start at the beginning. I think I lost you somewhere there.

Let's try to _____ the schedule, okay?

Can you _____? I don't want to talk to you right now. I'm still angry.

I know it's difficult to learn to play guitar but _____ it.

Please _____ a second. I'll help you when I'm done with this customer.

Answers

head back

come back

butt in

back up

keep to

go away

stick with

hold on

Slang 6: The Chicken or the Egg

Bob and Sam are talking about Sam's son.

Hey, how's your son doing these days? I heard he got into a bit of trouble?

He **drives me up the** He's both a **slacker** and a **stoner**. I don't know if it's **the chicken or the egg** but whatever the case, he's **flunking** out of high school because he's always

You were such a **keener** in school. How did this happen?

Trust me. I have no idea.

What does he say when you talk to him?

He just yells, **off my** We can't even have a real conversation about it. I'm scared he's ruining his life.

Well, I'm here for you if you need to talk about things.

Vocabulary

Drives me up the Makes me crazy.

Describes someone who is lazy.

Describes someone who likes to do illegal drugs often.

The chicken or the Which thing comes first?

Failing.

On drugs.

Describes someone who is the opposite of lazy.

Get off my Stop bugging me.

Practice

Seriously, _____. I don't want to talk about this anymore.

It _____ when he doesn't put his dishes in the dishwasher.

You're such a _____, studying two weeks before the test.

Is it _____? It's difficult to tell in this situation.

Let's get _____ after work tonight.

I was a _____ in high school but I quit when I went to university.

I'm _____ math but I don't care.

My daughter is a _____ and doesn't care about school. She'd rather just hang around with her friends.

Answers

get off my back

drives me up the wall

keener

the chicken or the egg

high

stoner

flunking

slacker

Collocations 6: Affordable Housing

Kerry and Joe are talking about the housing situation in Vancouver.

Kerry: Did you hear that the city of Vancouver is **taking action** to address **housing**

Joe: What are they doing? I'd love to move but **affordable housing** is hard to come by.

Kerry: They're building a new **housing development** and offering **low-interest rate** mortgages.

It's about Unless you **inherit** it's almost impossible for the **working Joe** to buy a house here.

Kerry: Well, **check into it** and if you buy one, invite me to your **housewarming**

Vocabulary

Taking Action: Doing something.

Housing The average price of houses in an area.

Affordable Housing that is designed to be cheaper than normal, usually subsidized by the government.

Housing An area in which the houses have all been planned and built at the same time in an organized way.

Low-interest When interest rates are lower than normal.

It's about Finally.

Inherit Getting money after someone has died.

Working The average working person.

Check into Find out more information about something.

Housewarming A party after moving into a new home.

Practice

What are the average _____ in Victoria like?

Are you going to _____ when your parents die?

I've love to get into that new _____ in the west end of the city.

I'm happy that the city is finally _____ on that guy across the street.

There's no _____ in New York City.

Congratulations on your new place! When's the _____?

Did he finally do his chores? _____.

I'm just an average _____, doing the 9-5.

I'm not sure about that. I'll have to _____.

It's a great time to buy a house when there are _____.

Answers

housing prices

inherit money

housing development

taking action

affordable housing

housewarming party

it's about time

working Joe

check into it

low-interest rates

Dialogue 7: Scale Back

Harper and Logan are talking about something at work.

Harper: Just so I'm clear on this: you're asking me to **scale back** production on Model 1234?

Logan: Yes, correct. Fuel prices are **skyrocketing** and there isn't as much demand for things that aren't. Put it on the **backburner** for now.

Harper: Is this the plan **for the long**

Logan: **Pretty much** as long as fuel prices remain at current levels and we're **in the** We're **feeling the pinch** with our expansion into Canada and we just don't have **money to burn** like we did a few years ago.

Harper: Okay, I got it. I'll let my team know.

Vocabulary

Scale back: Reduce something.

Skyrocketing: Increasing rapidly.

Fuel-efficient: Doesn't use much energy, compared to similar products.

Backburner: Leave something for now and deal with it later.

For the long haul: For the long term.

Pretty much: Almost 100% certain.

In the red: Losing money.

Feeling the pinch: Experiencing financial difficulties.

Money to burn: Extra money to spend freely.

Practice

Look at that new car he bought. He must have _____.

My company is in it _____.

The most important thing for a new car is that it has to be _____ because of my long commute.

I'm worried about this project that's now running _____.

We're _____ with Covid-19.

I _____ only want to know where I stand with this company.

Let's put this on the _____ until the economy recovers.

Fuel prices are _____ these days with the shortages.

Let's _____ production until the new model comes out.

Answers

money to burn

for the long haul

fuel-efficient

in the red

feeling the pinch

pretty much

backburner

skyrocketing

scale back

Idioms 7

Keep it Under Wraps

Meaning: To keep something secret until a specified time.

Origin: A term from horse racing. It refers to a rider that intentionally keeps his or her horse from running at top speed.

“Please *keep it under wraps* for a few more months, okay? I don't want my boss to know.”

Keep your Cool

Meaning: To maintain control of your composure or temper.

Origin: Uncertain.

“I know that Ted is annoying but he's also your boss. You have to *keep your*

Kick the Bucket

Meaning: An informal way of saying that someone has died.

Taking one's own life by hanging by kicking the bucket from underneath the feet.

"I wonder when that dictator will finally *kick the* I hope it's soon!"

Leave (Someone) Hanging

Meaning: To keep someone waiting for a decision or an answer (leave someone hanging). Or, to leave or certain details until a later time (leave it hanging).

Origin: Not reciprocating a "high-five."

"Don't *leave me hanging* here. You're either in or out. I need an answer now."

Let the Cat Out of the Bag

Meaning: To reveal a secret, on purpose or unintentionally.

Origin: Refers to the "cat o-nine tails." It's a whipping device (with nine cords) that is used to punish sailors. In the bag refers to the leather nature of the device because it has to be stored in a bag to prevent it from drying out.

"Jen! I can't believe you *let the cat out of the* I'm so disappointed in you."

Let the Dust Settle

Meaning: Wait for and let a situation become calm or normal after something exciting or unusual happened. Give something time before proceeding.

Origin: Unknown. But, could be related to construction where there's lots of dust that needs to settle before a place is inhabitable.

"I think we should *let the dust settle* before deciding on this."

Love is Blind

Meaning: To imply that with love, one is unable to see the faults or imperfections of a person. It can also mean that the looks of a person do not matter when you're in love.

Origin: First appeared in the early 1400s and was popularized by Shakespeare's works.

"Just go on a date with him. He's such a nice guy and *love is* right?"

Not My Cup of Tea

Meaning: A way to describe something that a person dislikes but which others enjoy.

First used as, “my cup of tea” by the British to describe something they like in the late 1800s. It then evolved to, “not my cup of tea” to describe something disliked in the 1920s.

“Game of Thrones *isn't my cup of* I don't know why so many people love it.”

Off the Hook

Meaning: To no longer be responsible for something. Another meaning is a phone line that is ringing constantly.

Refers to fishing where a fish that has been caught is out of options unless it is released back into the water.

“Please don't let her *off the hook* again! She needs to learn about consequences for her actions.”

Phrasal Verbs 7: Conned Out Of

Terry is talking to Lauren about how he lost some money.

So I just got **conned out of** \$1000! This salesman guy on *Craigslist* tricked me into buying a TV that doesn't even work.

Hang Did you report it to the police?

No. I feel embarrassed about it. I didn't want to **come**

Come It won't take long to **fill out** the form at the police station. They see this kind of thing all the time. I'll **go with** you. I hate seeing you get screwed out of that much cash.

You're right. Let's **get it over** Maybe I can get some justice.

Vocabulary

Conned out Tricked; fooled.

Hang Wait.

Come Report something.

Come Encouragement to do something.

Fill Write information on a form.

Go Join together.

Get it over with: Do something that you don't want to do.

Practice

My grandpa was _____ his life-savings.

You have to _____ and report that guy!

Taxes! Let's just _____ now.

Please _____ this form and we'll get back to you if we're interested.

_____ a second. This is important. What's that website URL again?

Why don't I _____ you? It won't be so bad then. We'll grab some *Starbucks* before we go too.

_____. Keep going! You're almost there.

Answers

conned out of

come forward

get it over with

fill out

hang on

go with

come on

Slang 7: Hey Ya'll

Mary, Sam, and Annie are friends who are at their high school dance.

Hey Let's This dance is so

Yeah for real. **Corny** is the only word for it.

Do you want to head back to my We can **nuke** some pizza pockets and watch a movie or something?

I'm **bummed** about leaving. I had such **high** But yeah, I'm in. Let's go.

I'll come too. Should we ask Tony?

Sam: Nah, let's keep it small. My parents will get **pissed** if too many people come over.

Vocabulary

Ya'll: A way of addressing more than one person, commonly used in the Southern USA.

Leave.

Small or amateur.

Cheezy, not slick.

Where someone lives; place of residence.

Microwave (verb).

Feeling let down about something.

High High expectations.

Pissed: Angry.

Practice

I had _____ for that movie. Why did everyone think it was so good?

My dad is _____ at me for crashing his car last week.

Let's _____. I'm getting so tired.

Hey _____, what are we doing this weekend?

Let's hang out at my _____ tonight.

I'm so _____ that I didn't get into UBC.

My dad is super _____ but also quite entertaining.

Just _____ it for 3 minutes.

That amusement park? It's _____. Don't waste your time going.

Answers

high hopes

pissed

split

ya'll

pad

bummed

corny

nuke

rinky-dink

Collocations 7: Get Into Trouble

Ian is talking to Ted about his many problems on the weekend.

Hey Ian, how was your weekend?

Oh, I **got into trouble** again! I got a **parking ticket**, **got lost** while hiking and then maybe got **food**

Oh wow. That sounds terrible. You always have interesting stories though, right?

I'm **envious of** your life. It seems much calmer.

Well, it's **not all rainbows and** I **asked somebody out** but she rejected me. I'm thinking about **giving up** on dating altogether.

Hang in there my friend. There are **plenty of fish in the**

Vocabulary

Got into Had some problems happen.

Parking A fine you have to pay for parking illegally.

Got Didn't know where you were.

Food Getting sick from something that you ate.

Envious Jealous of.

Not all rainbows and Real life isn't as good as it appears to others.

Asked somebody Asked someone if they wanted to go on a date.

Giving Stop trying.

Plenty of fish in the There are many eligible people to date.

Practice

He _____ out hiking because he didn't have any extra clothes or food and then he got lost.

When was the last time you _____? Maybe that's why you don't have a girlfriend!

I _____ all the time when I was visiting Seoul. It's such a big city!

Do you think that maybe it's _____? Why don't you go to the ER? I'm _____ Joe. He always seems to have so many ladies to go on dates with.

I'm thinking about _____ scuba diving. It's such an expensive hobby.

Things are not always as they appear. My life is _____.

I know you're sad but there are _____.

If you don't pay your _____ on time, the fine doubles after a month.

Answers

got into trouble

asked somebody out

got lost

food poisoning

envious of

giving up

not all rainbows and unicorns

plenty of fish in the sea

parking ticket

Dialogue 8: Up in the Air

Emma and Oliver are talking about a customer.

Emma: Hey, so I was just talking to Noah and it looks like they won't renew the contract. It's a bit **up in the air** but I think they want to **sever ties** with us.

Oliver: To me, **the writing is on the** They haven't been happy for months now.

Emma: Not to **throw someone under the bus** but the **elephant in the room** is Mia's performance as their account manager. It's just not good enough.

Oliver: I think you've **hit the nail on the** She's already **in the dog house**.

Emma: She's **all** It's time she **puts her money where her mouth**

Oliver: I'd love to go behind her back and **blow the whistle** on this but I don't want to draw attention to myself.

Vocabulary

Up in the air: Not decided yet.

Sever ties: To stop a relationship.

The writing is on the wall: It's obvious to everyone.

Throw someone under the bus: To blame someone for something.

The elephant in the room: The obvious thing that nobody is talking about.

Hit the nail on the head: See the problem clearly.

In the dog house: In trouble.

All talk: Good at talking but their actions don't reflect this.

Puts her money where her mouth is: Her actions need to reflect her words.

Blow the whistle: To disclose true information that might be harmful to someone.

Practice

Honestly, I just think he should _____ on his company. They're doing some terrible things.

I'm _____ with my kids if I get home too late from work.

I think we need to _____ with that contractor.

Why is nobody talking about _____?

It's time for her to _____ and do some work.

He's _____ but no action.

I hate that we have to _____ for this.

You've made a good point and _____ exactly.

Don't you think that _____? I'm going to get fired.

I don't think she's made the decision yet. It's still _____.

Answers

blow the whistle

in the dog house

sever ties

the elephant in the room

put her money where her mouth is

all talk

throw someone under the bus

hit the nail on the head

the writing is on the wall

up in the air

Idioms 8

On the Ball

Meaning: Refers to a person who is proactive and alert.

Origin: Generally refers to sports games that include a ball. A similar phrase is, “keep your eye on the ball.”

“Marni is so *on the ball*. She's a great addition to our team.”

On the Straight and Narrow

Meaning: Usually refers to a person who had previous hardship, and is now beginning to live life in an honest way.

Origin: From the Bible in Matthew 7:13-14: “Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.”

“How's Tony doing these days? I heard that he cleaned himself up and is back *on the straight and*

Out of Touch

Refers to a person whose views do not align with a majority of people, or a widely accepted conclusion or circumstance.

It may originate from the 1800s but it not clear.

“That professor is so *out of* I can't believe that he doesn't allow us to email him but instead makes us sign up for office hours.”

Play it Cool

Meaning: To make an effort to be calm and sensible in a difficult or uncertain situation. It can also refer to dating where you don't want to show someone just how much you like them.

Origin: Unclear.

“Do NOT text her back immediately. You need to *play it cool* and wait for at least a couple of hours.”

Push (Someone's) Buttons

Meaning: To do something to intentionally make someone angry, upset or frustrated

Origin: From the 1920s, of American origin. Comes from a time when home appliances started requiring just the push of a button to work.

“You're starting to *push my* I need to take a walk and cool off. Why don't we talk later?”

Rule of Thumb

Meaning: General rule about something.

Various theories:

- Builders who don't measure well and just use an approximate measure (thumb).
- A thumb is generally equivalent to an inch when measuring cloth.
- The thumb is used when brewing beer to gauge temperature.
- An alleged British law that allowed men to beat their wives with sticks no wider than a thumb.

“A good *rule of thumb* is to think about big purchases for at least a week before buying them.”

Run Before you Can Walk

Meaning: Saying that you should be confident with fundamentals before attempting to complete more complex tasks.

Origin: Uncertain but could refer to young children who start with crawling, then walking and finally running.

“He always wants to *run before he can* Math is the basis for just about anything in the engineering field—he has to master it.”

Phrasal Verbs 8: Wear Off

Matt is talking to Tony about his new pool.

Hey, how's your new pool?

Well, the novelty is starting to **wear** That's for sure. It **uses up** so much electricity to run the filters 24/7! It costs me money every time I **turn**

That doesn't sound good. What do you have to buy for it?

You have to buy all these chemicals when you're just **starting** The salespeople, of course, **leave out** how expensive they are! I certainly didn't **plan for** it.

But are the kids happy?

Matt: Oh yeah. 100% they would **stay in** until they were burnt to a crisp if we let them.

Vocabulary

Wear Lose effectiveness or intensity.

Uses Consumes.

Turn Change direction.

Starting Beginning.

Leave Don't include.

Plan Decide or arrange something ahead of time.

Stay Not go anywhere.

Practice

The drugs started to _____ and it was super painful.

It's always difficult when you're _____. Don't give up.

Let's _____ dinner at 7:00 but I'll let you know when I leave work.

Can you _____ for a minute? I have to get changed.

Why don't we _____ tonight? We've spent so much money lately.

Please don't _____ Carrie. I think she wanted to help too.

I think that old thing _____ way too many batteries.

Answers

wear off

starting out

plan for

turn around

stay in

leave out

uses up

Slang 8: No Biggie

Keith is asking his girlfriend Mandy for some help.

Hey can you help me out with the garden this weekend?

You

You're so That's why I love you. Plus, you're **hot** too.

You really know how to flatter a girl. It's **no**

Okay, let's **crack open a bottle** when we're done and **kick back** a bit.

Vocabulary

Honey, sweetie (said to someone you're in a romantic relationship with).

You Agreeing to something.

Describes someone who is generally relaxed about things.

Describes someone good-looking.

No Not a big deal.

Crack open a Open a bottle of wine.

Kick Relax.

Awesome; great.

Practice

That's so _____ about your new job!

Will you give me a ride to the airport on Tuesday? _____.

Oh, _____. I don't mind at all.

Hey _____, let's get sushi tonight.

Your new boyfriend is so _____.

Let's _____ and BBQ tonight.

When should we _____? Is it too early?

Answers

wicked

you bet

no biggie

babe

hot

kick back/chill

crack open a bottle

Collocations 8: Core Values

Lindsey and Ted are talking about a partnership with Tim, a business associate.

Lindsey: I'd like to talk to you about something.

Ted: Sure, what's up?

I'm **not comfortable with** our partnership with Tim anymore. I know it's **highly profitable** but I don't want to be **associated with** him. It raises questions about what our **core values** are.

Ted: I agree. I think we should **take action** on this **as soon as** I've been having the same doubts. We're not quite **breaking the law** but what we're doing isn't really above board.

Lindsey: Okay, good. I'm happy that we're **on the same**

Vocabulary

Not comfortable Not feeling relaxed about something.

Highly Something that can make a lot of money.

Associated Connected to.

Core A person or an organization's most important beliefs.

Take Do something.

As soon as Quickly, at the first possible opportunity.

Breaking the Doing something illegal.

On the same Agree about something.

Practice

I'm _____ going out alone at night.

One of our _____ is to care for the environment.

I want to finish up this assignment _____.

My husband and I are _____ with our budget.

Even though it's _____, it takes up too much of my time to continue with it.

Let's _____ on this tomorrow morning.

I can't believe that jaywalking is considered _____ in this city.

I don't want to be _____ that guy. Nothing good will come of it.

Answers

not comfortable with

core values

as soon as possible

on the same page

highly profitable

take action

breaking the law

associated with

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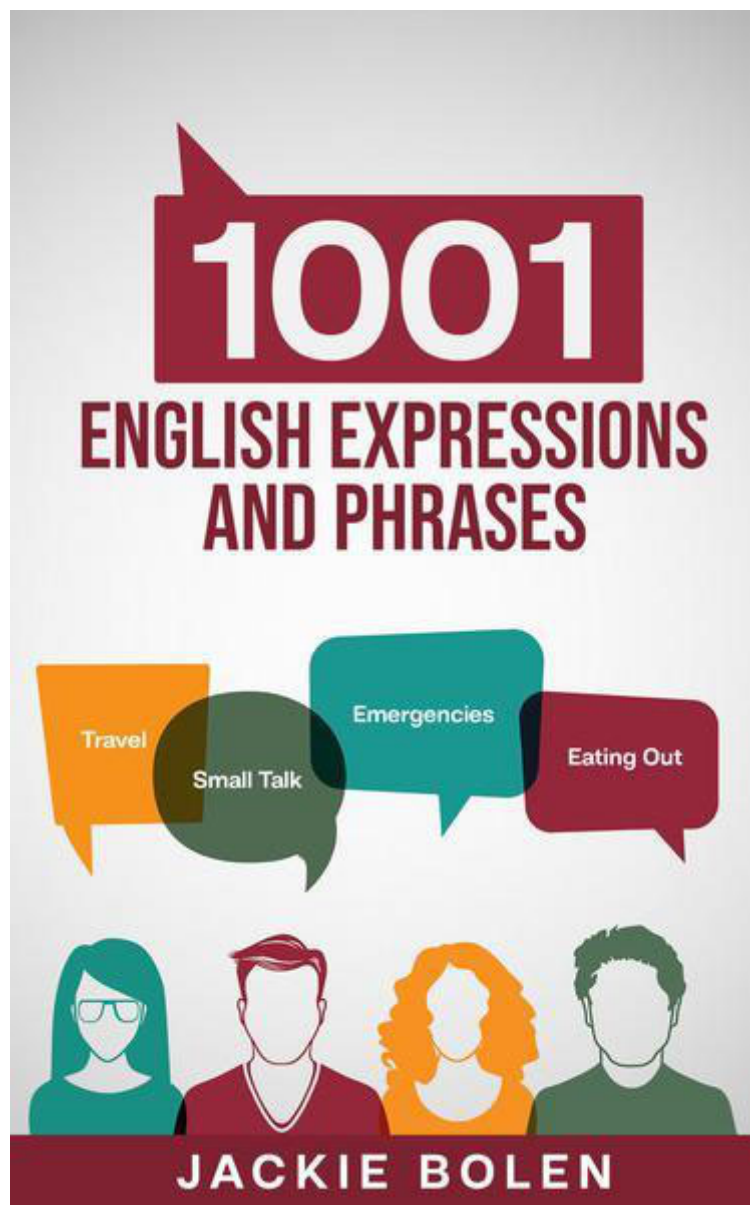
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